

Thea (11) is now a lifeguard

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Published: 22 September 2015, 5:12 p.m.

Thea Lischner from Narvik spent most of her summer vacation in the United States learning how to be a lifeguard.

Benjamin Lischner, a Narvik physician and Thea's father is originally from California. The family usually spends part of their summer vacation in the US each year - and this year their 11-year-old daughter did something a little out of the ordinary.

Junior lifeguard

It all started last summer. Thea has been an active swimmer for 5-6 years. Having seen lifeguards in action the family decided to sign should Thea up for junior lifeguards.

Benjamin says that these programs are common in the United States.

"I've even been park ranger (should say state lifeguard). It's an excellent job to have while studying, and many go further to become doctors, police, firefighters or nurses. I was inspired to become a doctor."

Thea was the only person from Norway who attended this program.

"The kids learn leadership and are physically active, says Benjamin Lischner."

Six hours: Thea and the other participants trained six hours a day.

Four weeks: The program lasted four weeks.

"We trained six hours a day."

So this summer, it was four weeks vacation and four weeks of training, she says and smiles.

The day began at 9am, and she was finished at 3pm.

Swimming: Thea has been active swimmer for several years and that has been a benifit for the junior lifeguard program.

A blast

The program days were full of activities.

"It was lots of fun," says the 11-year-old.

They practiced lifesaving in different places: the ocean, lake and river.

"I want to do the program next year, says 11-year-old and smiles."

First Aid: CPR is important to know, and Thea has been practicing a lot this summer.

Many activities

Each day they started with warm ups.

"We swam a lot, paddled on the rescue board and ran a lot," says Thea.

The kids trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and practiced in using rescue equipment.

"We had lectures by police, ambulance, fire department and lifeguard tower," says Thea.

All participants had their own uniform, and there were 63 in all who participated.

The only one: Thea was the only kid from Norway who participated in the program in California

Cookie competition

But the course was not only physical activity and rescue training. They also had other competitions.

"We competed to bake the best cookies. I made vanilla cookies with the Norwegian flag," she says.

Uniform: All participants of the course had their own uniforms.

Test

Graduation day they had a physical test. They first swam 500 meters with a rescue buoy. They did this three times. They then paddled 800 meters with a rescue board. This also three times. Then they ran five kilometers and ended with a test in cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

"I finished at 68.25 minutes," says Thea.

Are you able to rescue a person in aquatic distress after this program?

"Yes, I should hope so!"

Physical tests: participants had to go through several physical tests along the way. Including paddling with the rescue board.

"We also had to dive six meters down and retrieve an object. There were only two that failed in my group."

Would you like to become a lifeguard?

"Maybe. I don't know quite yet," says 11-year-old.

"When you are over 13 and have attended the program twice you are eligible to become an assistant. I might want to do that when I am 15 or 16," says Thea.